

**Records of Proceedings
Citizens Police Advisory Committee
City of Gardner, Kansas**

The Citizens Police Advisory Committee met at 7:00 PM on Monday June 29th, 2020, at the Gardner Justice Center at 16540 Moonlight Road in Gardner, Kansas.

CALL TO ORDER

There was a quorum present and the meeting was called to order.

- Chief of Police Jay Belcher
- Ementi Coary (absent)
- Al Sanchez
- Carrie Wilson (Chairperson)
- Cleverson Souza
- Councilmember Rich Melton
- Rebecca Streeter (absent)

PRESENTATIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS

An email from Jennifer Schumaker was read into the record at her request. See attached email transcript.

From: Jennifer Schumaker <jkgeschumaker@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, June 1, 2020 11:09 AM

To: James Belcher <JBelcher@gardnerkansas.gov>; Al Sanchez <alsanchezkc@gmail.com>; Carrie Wilson <jhawk554@twc.com>; Cleverson Souza <cleverson_souza2002@yahoo.com>; Ementi Coary <Ementi135@gmail.com>; Rebecca Streeter <rebeccadstreeter@gmail.com>; Rich Melton <rmelton@gardnerkansas.gov>

Subject: Citizens Police Advisory Committee

Members of the Citizens Police Advisory Committee, Councilperson Melton, and Police Chief Belcher,

In the aftermath of yet another devastating death of a person of color at the hands of a law enforcement officer, I urge you to start a conversation within our city on how we can ensure our black and brown citizens of Gardner feel safe. Through diversity trainings, explorations of our own inherent biases and how we change them, and celebrations of our unique cultures and history, I believe we can help support a shift in our metropolitan area and country.

I also want to thank our Gardner law enforcement officers for putting themselves on the line each and every shift for our city. I see the positive supports you provide for Gardner and I appreciate you.

None of this is easy; in fact, growth and change and reform are always hard, sometimes painful. But together we are stronger.

Thank you,
Jennifer Schumaker
Gardner resident

CONSENT AGENDA

The minutes from the February 24, 2020, meeting were reviewed for content and accuracy and no changes were recommended. Member Carrie Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes. Member Al Sanchez seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Police Operations during Covid-19 pandemic:

On March 12th we received health orders from BOCC regarding stay-at-home. JOCO police chiefs began meeting twice weekly about the orders, given new orders from the Governor overwrote county orders. Education was the focus for the chiefs. No arrests were wanted. During the stay-at-home effort, Gardner PD internally mandated:

- Wearing masks
- Temperature checks at beginning of each shift
- Temporarily stopped all self-initiated activities to limit exposure. This included car stops. Pedestrian checks, truck checks, and warrant service.
- NTAs were issued whenever possible, with exception of DV arrests.
- Now that original stay-at-home has expired, it is uncertain how arrests will be handled at the county jail.
- Mask use now mandated by governor effective July 3rd. Masks will be worn in all public places, and in all public access areas of the Justice Center.
- Education will again be the focus on mask use, as enforcement is a civil issue and not criminal.
- If a business complains about customers refusing to wear a mask, it will be up to the business to inform the customer of their policy (if they have one) of mask use in their business. If the customer still refuses, the business can tell the customer to leave. Refuse to leave and the business can ask that the customer be cited for Criminal Trespass.
- We have received, and continue to receive, lots of good will from the community. Our focus will again be to maintain that good will and to educate those that have questions about mask use.

2. Questions on Court:

- Virtual Court – Municipal court has limited cases to 30 or so to maintain social distancing. One case was completed in court as a virtual trial and went quickly, without incident. As a side note, Chief Belcher pointed out that the Municipal Court is part of the Finance Department and not the Police Department.
- District Court – offering “blue jean” testimony via video for officers. 3 areas set up at Justice Center to handle officer’s testimony.

3. Budget Update:

- Finance Department is preparing to take suggestions to City Council. PD gave up 4 patrol cars for 2020 purchases, and voluntarily halted the hiring of one new officer after hiring 2 of 3 approved.
- All departments submitted for consideration in mid-July by Council. Everyone understands the tough decisions. PD knows it will get all necessities as needed. PD is hoping to be able to hire 3rd officer soon.
- Police canine is not in question. A separate fund has been set aside and is not subject to budget constraints. Zeus is 6 years old and has had 2 surgeries. If he needs to be retired, then the fund will be used if needed to purchase a new canine.
- PD needs to replace a number of shotguns. That will have to wait.
- Training budget has been cut. Local training will have to suffice for now.

4. Airshow Update:

- Still on track for September 5th and 6th, 2020.
- Councilmember Melton said Navy Blue Angels have cancelled their 2020 season. Our airshow is featuring the Air Force Thunderbirds, but the comparison was made.
- The air show itself is in the County, but Gardner has vehicle and pedestrian traffic issues to be responsible for.
- Next meeting is crucial. Event planners must protect pilots, crowds and vendors alike. An alternate date has been proposed of July 4th, 2021. Other dates considered. With Covid-19 being so volatile, everything can change in a day.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Community Relations:

- Chief Belcher discussed new Community Policing position
- Community Outreach has been in planning. Now ready to begin implementation.
- Building relationships – Jo Co Chiefs met with NAACP – very positive meeting.
- 8 Can't Wait Initiative – Jo Co Agencies already doing
- Gardner PD suspended LVNR use 4 days after Floyd death. Looking for alternatives.
- Gardner PD was second agency in Jo Co to use body cameras by all officers. Lenexa added them in 2009. Gardner in 2010. Body cams don't always pick up everything. They are excellent tools but have limitations.
- Gardner PD believes in Best Practices and what is good for the community.
- Gardner PD has increased social media posts since Covid-19 began.
- Gardner PD does not practice zero tolerance. It removed officer discretion.
- 8 Can't Wait Initiative started in Gardner, Olathe, Lenexa and Overland Park.
- Video of Chiefs meeting with NAACP will be linked on City's PD webpage. Q & A with Chiefs and NAACP was great experience for all.
- Discussed procedure for assigning Community Policing officer and backfilling their position. JAG grant was for \$120,000 for 3 years of position. PD saw the need 8 months ago when grant applied for. Didn't wait for recent events.

Officers were notified 2 weeks ago that position is coming so they can be ready to submit their letters of interest in the position.

- Gardner received Violence against Women Act grant provided \$ for Detective Hays to work assaults against women exclusively. Also noted Jen Jordan is incredible grant writer.
- Chief Belcher wants the new CPO to come to CPAC when selected. Really want to involve youth early on. Told group about the 2 kids that came to PD with found wallet.
- Chief commented about the old adage – “If you think you are the smartest person in the room, you need to find another room.”
- Racial bias training has been online. Will be done in person next time. NAACP would like to attend.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Officer Involved Shooting lawsuit finalized on March 6th, 2020. PD rank and file were debriefed on June 26th by a Major from KCPD. Shared experiences they have had and failures they have learned from. Gardner PD captains are going to offer more detailed debrief for officers that so desire. Was important to get closure for our officers. Has been a teaching opportunity for all. Councilmember Melton suggested involving Council Members if they so desire.
2. Member Souza inquired how Gardner PD posts opening for police officer positions.
3. Discussed attendance by committee members. 1937 Resolution established CPAC. 2026 discusses attendance. Also discussed web-based meeting if some cannot attend in person due to Covid-19 or other issues.

COMMITTEE MEMBER UPDATES

None

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Member Al Sanchez to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Member Souza. All members voted in favor and motion carried. Meeting was adjourned.